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FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4309
INFO AMEMBASSY KAMPALA PRIORITY
CDC ATLANTA GA PRIORITY 4228

UNCLAS NAIROBI 000211

SIPDIS

BT

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: ASEC CASC KE PGOV
SUBJECT: KENYA STATUS REPORT: JANUARY 18, 2008

REF: NAIROBI 197 AND PREVIOUS

¶1. (SBU) AS OF 01/18/08 1700 HOURS (NAIROBI TIME):

SECURITY SITUATION: POCKETS OF CONFRONTATION CONTINUED IN NAIROBI (KIBERA AND MATHARE) AND KISUMU (AND OUTSKIRTS) BETWEEN POLICE AND CIVILIANS, CHARACTERIZED IN LARGE PART BY GROUPS OF YOUNG MALES BURNING TIRES, VEHICLES AND RUBBISH AND SETTING UP ROADBLOCKS. NO DEATHS REPORTED UP TO NOW. DEMONSTRATORS IN MOMBASA SEEKING TO MARCH ON THE DOWNTOWN FROM SEVERAL MOSQUES (AFTER FRIDAY PRAYERS) WERE DISPERSED BY POLICE WITH TEAR GAS. CDC AND MRU PERSONNEL IN KISUMU REPORTED HEARING GUNSHOTS IN THE DISTANCE, BUT DOWNTOWN WAS DESERTED. ROAD TO THE AIRPORT WAS OPEN, BUT ROCKS ON THE ROAD (IMPROPTU ROADBLOCKS) MADE IT DIFFICULT TO TRANSIT. AS FAST AS POLICE CLEAR, THEY REAPPEAR. DEMONSTRATORS MARCHED PEACEFULLY THROUGH ELDORET FOR THE THIRD DAY; POLICE STOOD BACK.

ODM LEADERSHIP TODAY ANNOUNCED THE END OF THE STRATEGY OF "MASS ACTION" DEMONSTRATIONS AND BEGINNING NEXT WEEK, WILL BEGIN A BOYCOTT (AND ENCOURAGE WORKFORCE STRIKES) AT ENTERPRISES AND COMPANIES OWNED BY CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE PNU/GOVERNMENT ELITE. THEY PROMISED TO ANNOUNCE THE LIST OF ENTERPRISES, BUT RUMORS ARE THAT IT WILL INCLUDE COMPANIES OWNED BY THE KENYATTA AND MICHUKI FAMILIES, AMONG OTHERS. THE CALL FOR AN END OF DEMONSTRATIONS, IF IMPLEMENTED, SHOULD GO A LONG WAY TO ENDING THE CONFRONTATIONS AND DISRUPTIONS.

THERE CONTINUE TO BE REPORTS OF "ETHNIC" BASED VIOLENCE IN PARTS OF RIFT VALLEY AND WESTERN PROVINCES, CHARACTERIZED BY LOOTING AND BURNING OF TARGETED HOUSES.

MISSION PERSONNEL: EMBASSY -- AND CDC AND MRU OFFICES AT KEMRI -- IN NAIROBI WERE OPEN FOR BUSINESS. CDC AND MRU OFFICES IN KISIAN/KUMBWEA WERE CLOSED TODAY; PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION WAS NON-EXISTENT AND POLICE ADVISED CDC TO STAY OFF THE RAD'S IN/AROUND THE AREA WHERE THEY HAVE OFFICES. NAIROBI CDC OFFICER FLEW TO KISUMU TODAY FOR A DAY; WILL RETURN TO NAIROBI TOMORROW. EMBASSY CORE EAC HELD A TELECONFERENCE WITH CDC AND MRU PERSONNEL IN KISUMU TO DISCUSS ANY CONCERNS. WE ARE CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC THAT THE CALL TO END DEMONSTRATIONS WILL CALM THE SITUATION AND PERMIT RESUMPTION OF NORMAL OPERATIONS. EAC MET TODAY; REPORTED SEPTEL. KISUMU INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL, INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF KENYA AND ROSSLYN ACADEMY WERE ALL OPEN TODAY.

AMCITS: THE AMBASSADOR HELD A TOWN HALL MEETING WITH AMCITS TODAY, ATTENDED BY OVER 100 PEOPLE. HE REVIEWED THE POLITICAL SITUATION, STATUS OF DIALOGUE BETWEEN KIBAKI AND Odinga AND ANSWERED, WITH CONS AND RSO, QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS ABOUT SECURITY AND ACS.

RANNEBERGER